

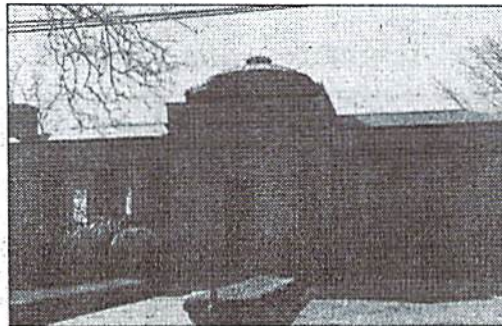
Committee Reviewing 'Wright' Solutions

By KEITH L. MARTIN

While it has been nearly a year since a bid to create a student union in the Wright Building failed at Town Meeting, a study into how to more effectively use the structure is currently underway.

The town recently selected Boston-based architectural firm Feingold, Alexander and Associates to study the building's compliance with American with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements and its historical preservation. This analysis will coincide with work by a committee to determine future uses for the former library, which opened in 1909.

"This is an important building because its location is in the heart of the campus of the schools and it is historical," said Conservation Administrator Joe Grady, who sits on the committee looking at the building's potential uses.



The fate of the Wright Building could become clearer in a few months as an architectural assessment of the structure will soon be underway.

Grady is joined on the committee by School Committee member Neil Johnson, Historical Commission member Norman Tucker, Municipal Committee on Disabilities member Marcia Solberg, Community Preservation Committee member Tony Kelso and Steve Jones of the Youth Commission.

After last year's town meeting appropriated \$50,000 in Community Preservation Act funds for the assessment of the building, the town put out a Request for Proposal and received 15 replies. Grady said all the proposals were carefully reviewed with three applicants being chosen for interviews, including Feingold, Alexander and Associates.

"I was surprised they wanted a project as small as this because this is a big, top-of-the-line firm," said Grady. "One of their principles came to meet with us and expressed their interest in the project and how they envisioned multiple uses for the building."

Grady added that the firm also found the 1968 flat-roof addition to the rear of the building, which many in town dislike, might have some historical significance itself.

"They will give us some idea of the condition of the building, from the interior to the exterior," said Grady. "This is a solid way to look at what's going on with this building from a firm that has done work on the Wang Center, Boston's Old City Hall, the Hatchshell and other [well-known] structures."

Holly Morris of the Community Preservation Committee said that she is also excited with the selection of Feingold, Alexander and Associates and that pictures and plans of the building have been sent to the firm with keys to the building soon to follow.

While the \$46,000 assessment is underway, committee members will brainstorm on three uses for the building, said Grady, with one most likely being a youth center.

The origins of the Wright Building date back to 1889, when Henry Winsor gifted \$5,000 to the Trustees of the Duxbury Partridge Academy for a free library in town. George and Georgiana Wright signed a deed of trust seven months later giving the trustees a parcel of land on St. George Street with a house already on it, to use for a library and place for social gatherings which they wanted as a memorial to their late son, George Buckham Wright.

In 1907, Georgiana Wright offered to build a more permanent building on the St. George Street three-eighths of an acre parcel if the town would re-locate the house currently on it, which Grady believes is the house located directly across from Alden Street.

A new building was constructed and in July of 1909, the library opened to the public.

As for this next chapter in the Wright Building's history, Grady said the timeline for both the completion of the assessment and the committee's recommendations for re-uses of the structure to be at the end of May when they will present their findings to the town.